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Railroad Routes in the Caspian Sea Area

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2. [redacted] the railroad lines between Astrakhan and Baku. Direct communication between these two cities became possible only after construction, during World War II, of the branch line running from Astrakhan to Kislyar. This branch is a single-track line beginning in Astrakhan, passing through the station at Astrakhan II (the railroad yards), across the Volga River on a bridge, and thence on to Turovo, Linayno, Basy, Chernyy Rynok, Yurkovka and Kislyar. The route to Baku from Kislyar then follows the old single-track line through Gudermes, Khasavyurt, Makhachkala, Izberbash, Derbent, Kumkat, Khachmas, Divichi, Kyzyl Burun, Baladzhary, Kishleg and Baku.

3. [redacted] information on technical conditions and operating schedules along the route from Astrakhan to Baku. The bridge across the Volga at Astrakhan is in exceedingly poor condition. The destruction of this bridge has been scheduled for the time when the new bridge in the southern outskirts of Astrakhan has been completed. The line from Astrakhan to Gudermes is single-tracked and although it was built fairly recently it is in unsatisfactory technical condition. It was not only built hastily, but it passes through a region which has severe meteorological conditions. There are strong winds and sharp fluctuations of temperature between summer and winter periods and in addition there is a lack of vegetation and the terrain is sandy.

4. From Gudermes to Makhachkala there is a double-track railroad which is in satisfactory technical condition. From Makhachkala to Baku it is single-tracked except for the area around Baladzhary where there is a double track. The trip as a passenger from Astrakhan to Baku takes 48 to 50 hours and in Gudermes it is necessary to change to another train. From Astrakhan to Gudermes Diesel locomotives are used due to the extremely arid region between these two cities. From Gudermes to Baku steam locomotives are used.

5. The route from Astrakhan to Rostov-on-Don is also [redacted] limited information. From Astrakhan to Gudermes the same branch enroute to Baku is used as

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described [redacted]. From Guderme to Rostov-on-Don the line runs through Grczny, Prokhladnyy, Mineralny Vody, Nevinnomyssk, Armavir, Kropotkin, Tikhoretsk, Pavlovskaya, Kushchevskaya, Bataysk and finally Rostov-on-Don. From Guderme to Prokhladnyy the road is single-tracked and is in satisfactory technical condition. From the latter station to Rostov-on-Don the road is double-tracked and is in satisfactory condition. The trains to Prokhladnyy and Mineralny Vody from Guderme are conveyed by steam locomotives using liquid fuel, but from the two former stations to Rostov-on-Don, steam locomotives using solid fuel (coal) are employed. The railroad trip from Astrakhan to Rostov-on-Don takes from 48 to 50 hours. It is necessary to change trains in Mineralny Vody.

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6. The route from Astrakhan to Stalingrad is a new route and was built during World War II. It is a single track road and is in satisfactory technical condition. The route passes from Astrakhan through Dosang, Kharabali, Verblyuzh'ya, Verkhniy, Baskunchak, Petropavlovskiy, Leninsk and Paromnaya. Beyond this point passengers or trains cross the Volga River on ferries and proceed to Stalingrad. The distance from Paromnaya to Stalingrad is about 35 to 40 kilometers. The trip from Astrakhan to Stalingrad takes about twenty hours.
7. The Astrakhan-Moscow route has the following itinerary: From Astrakhan through Dosang, Kharabali, Verblyuzh'ya, Verkhniy Baskunchak, Sl'ten, Dzhanybek, Pallasovka, Hrasnyy Kut, Pushkino (formerly Urbakh), Saratov, Aktarak, Rtishchevo, Kirsanov, Tambov, Michurinsk, Ryazhsk, Ryazan', Rybnoe, Kolonna, Voskresensk, Ramenskoe, Lyubertay and Moscow at the Paveletskiy Railroad Station. The road from Astrakhan to Saratov is a single track and is in unsatisfactory condition. A speed of 30 to 35 miles per hour is sometimes reached between these two cities, but the poor condition of the railroad does not allow speeds above 35 miles per hour. From Astrakhan to Kharabali the road passes over nine metal bridges, all of which are in satisfactory technical condition. From Saratov to Moscow the road is double track and is in satisfactory technical condition. The trip from Astrakhan to Moscow takes 65 to 70 hours.
8. In the five year plan for rehabilitation and development of the national economy for the period of 1946 to 1950, there was envisioned the construction of a railroad from Astrakhan to Gurev, a distance of nearly 400 kilometers. In 1951 survey work had been completed only in part and no construction work had been started. The surveying was done by an organization of the Ministry of Railroads (MPS), the name of said organization is unknown [redacted]. MPS is supposed to build the line from Astrakhan to Gurev with the aid of forced labor obtained from the MVD. The arrangement is by contract between MPS and MVD whereby the services of the forced labor received by the former are compensated for by the payment of funds to the latter. The route will probably be serviced by Diesel locomotives for a couple of reasons. The shortage of water and coal in a region where there is an adequate supply of Diesel fuel support this theory. The greatest difficulties in construction and operation of this line will be due to the shortage of water, the lack of vegetation, the strong winds and the drifting sand. In addition there is also the great differential between the minimum and maximum temperatures of winter and summer in this region. The construction of a road bed and its maintenance would be extremely difficult under these conditions.
9. The proposed itinerary of this route is from Astrakhan north to a point midway between Dosang and Khozetai, thence southeasterly to Khozetai. From the latter town the line will proceed to Gurev via Korduan, Ganyushkino, Kalmak Aral, Mikhaylovskiy, Zaborun's, Monash, Novebogotinskoe and Kondaurovo.

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ENCLOSURE (A): Sketch Showing Planned Route of Astrakhan-Gurev Railroad

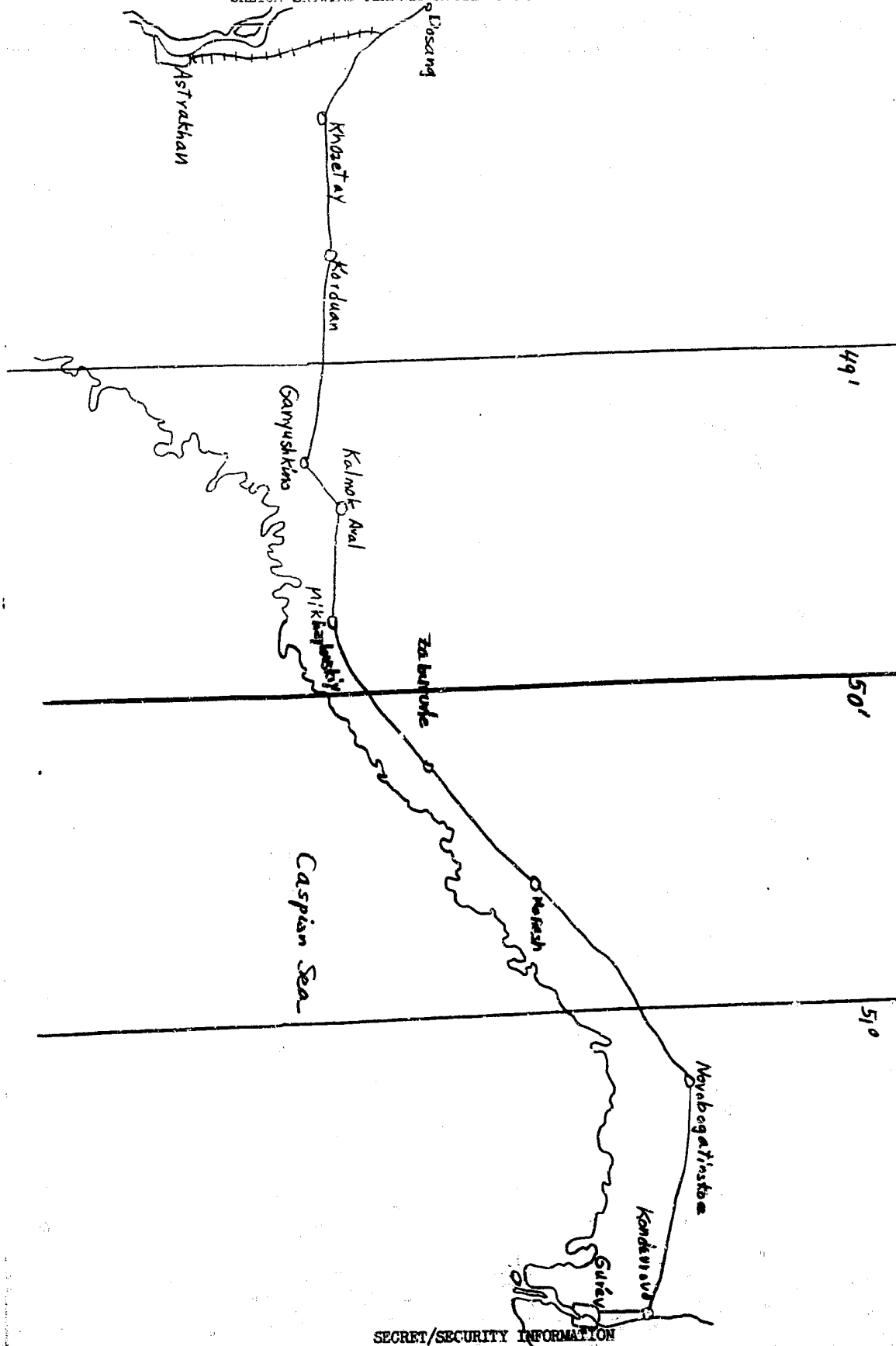
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ENCLOSURE (A)

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SKETCH SHOWING PLANNED ROUTE OF ASTRAKHAN-GUREV RAILROAD



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